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ABSTRACT

This summary of a final report concerns a project that dealt with the problem of inadequate materials for use in theatre arts education at elementary and teacher training levels. Research during an eight-month period consisted of seeking, examining, assessing, and procuring materials in four large European areas. The status of children's drama as a theatre art throughout Europe may be attributed to the following factors: cultural tradition, subsidy, artistic quality, plays, philosophy, and creative and educational drama. The present position of children's drama in the United States appears to be due fundamentally to a lack of theatre tradition and a lack of philosophy that aims to provide theatre arts education for children and youth. The materials from abroad have potential use in the children's drama field in the United States. The complete final report contains 14 references and three appendixes. The appendixes list theatre materials, creative dramatic materials, and children's drama personnel. (DB)

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SUMMARY,

THEATRE ARTS' MATERIALS' RESEARCH:

A RESEARCH STUDY TO SEEK NEW THEATRE ARTS' MATERIALS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND TO DEVELOP THESE MATERIALS FOR USE IN THEATRE EDUCATION AT ELEMENTARY AND TEACHER TRAINING LEVELS.

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INTRODUCTION

Children's drama in the United States, a twentieth century educational endeavor, embraces both children's theatre and creative dramatics. Children's theatre based on the traditional theatre concept is concerned with producing plays for children's audiences. Creative dramatics is concerned with the process of guiding children to create informal drama. From the beginning of the century until the present the literature in the children's drama field reflects two chief trends, first, continuous exploration of practices, and second, recent critical attacks suggesting revision of the subject.

Probably the most pertinent research lies in a monograph by 28 leaders in the field, Children's Theatre and Creative Dramatics, published in 1961. Developed under the auspicies of the American Educational Theatre Association (AETA) this study attempted to make a definitive investigation of children's drama, and concluded that among other exigencies the subject needed examination and improvement in basic principles and practices. The study showed that creative dramatics is practiced largely as a methodology to teach skills and content of language arts and social studies and is used also as recreation, personality development activity and therapy, but rarely is it taught as a subject of art in its own right. Instructional materials for dramatization rely heavily on familiar and oft-repeated folk tales and verse and on historical events where factual knowledge is of first importance. Children's theatre has not been included as a subject in public school education in systematic curricula, though theatre performances, programmed as enrichment, are scheduled. However, performances in leisure-time programs represent more clearly a national pattern. In quality,

production standards range widely due to a variety of producing groups composed largely of amateurs. Plays are selected from a limited repertoire of scripts consisting mainly of adaptations of folk and fairy tales and dramatizations of historical events and children's classics.

OBJECTIVES

This project dealt with the problem of inadequate materials for use in theatre arts' education at elementary and teacher training levels. Because of extensive European developments in theatre and drama education for children, the project sought to research these developments. Research, alert for both conventional and conceptual materials, aimed to examine play scripts and instructional materials used in teaching drama to children and to investigate philosophies, principles and practices.

The approach to the problem was an initial and limited one. It was proposed that the problem be dealt with in two phases, the first with emphasis on research and procurement of materials, was planned to be conducted during the academic year, October, 1965 to June, 1966. Phase two, intended for development and dissemination of materials, was suggested as a follow-up, but was not designed as an integral part of the initial proposal.

The central hypothesis was a belief that artists exploring children's drama in cultural environments where theatre tradition had flourished for centuries, would have developed philosophies and effective practices in both theatre and educational drama. It was further believed that theatres would have collected repertoires of scripts, available for children's theatre production, and that educational dramatists would have developed instructional materials for use in teaching creative dramatics. It was assumed that recognized children's drama personnel would provide a primary source for research and for the procurement of materials, and would do so liberally.

METHOD

Research was conducted jointly by the project director and research assistant, and followed for the most part a general procedure of inquiry and assessment. Materials were sought, examined, assessed and procured when judged appropriate. Contacts for research were made through three main avenues. These included: (1) the national centers of the International Theatre Institute in an arrangement made in advance with the United States Center, the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA); (2) the Chairman and Secretary-general of the Association Internationale de Theatre pour l' Enfance et la Jeunesse (ASSITEJ) and with members of this association who practiced children's drama in the countries

visited; and, (3) cultural attache officers in the United States Information Service Departments of the United States Consulates in several European countries.

Research was guided from the viewpoints of investigation of the subject in designated geographical areas within limitations of time dictated by an eight months' period for the research phase of the study. Investigation proceeding on both a vertical and horizontal design sought materials in both children's theatre and creative dramatics, and researched in both educational institutions and recreational centers. The study was conducted geographically in four large European areas with an approximate two months' period in each area. The areas visited in order of progressive sequence and time periods were as follows:

I. October 13 - November 15, 1965 - Northern European Countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Belgium and West Berlin).

II. November 16, 1965 - January 16, 1966 - England (Concentration in the areas of London, Birmingham, Yorkshire and Surrey).

III. January 17 - April 1, 1966 - Middle and Southern European countries (France, Portugal, Spain and Italy).

IV. April 2 - June 10, 1966 - Middle and Eastern European Countries (Switzerland, West Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Turkey and Greece).

A detailed account of procedure during the eight months' period includes the following activities: (1) attended 61 theatre productions for children and youth; (2) conferred with 29 leaders in the field; (3) interviewed 157 playwrights, directors, teachers, and theatre personnel in positions to assist in the study; (4) visited 76 schools, five colleges and training centers and 15 recreational and civic centers; (5) observed 21 classes in mime, movement, improvisation, speech and playmaking; (6) observed five rehearsals; (7) viewed four films on teaching drama to children; (8) listened to seven radio broadcasts for in-school education on Movement, Music and Mime; (9) listened to three recordings of play performances by children and one opera by children; (10) corresponded with 102 drama personnel and educators regarding research; (11) spoke to four children's theatre associations; and (12) attended the first general assembly of the International Association of Theatre for Youth (ASSITEJ) in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

No major problems were encountered but research was hampered in a few instances by minor problems, mainly those of scheduling.

RESULTS

I. Children's Theatre

Conventional and conceptual materials were procured including 105 children's theatre plays; 59 scripts (four operas) for adult producers; 46 scripts (one opera) for children and youth producers; each intended for children's audiences, ranging from 6-12 years of age. Scripts, and in a few instances, production programs and photographs were procured.

Conceptual materials include information on the philosophies of children's theatres and practices related to the following: educational theatre programs; theatre production and projects; national and international theatre activities; and children's drama research.

Of two chief concepts in educational theatre programs, one aims, primarily, for education by repertory theatre performances for children and youth in theatres in leisure-time hours. The other concept aims for education by participation by children and youth in drama and theatre classes. Training classes lead in progressive sequence to participation by children and youth in theatre performances and production (Stockholm Childrens' and Youth Theatre).

Of the many different explorations in production, two countries offer new concepts which bear particular study. The first is in Czechoslovakia at the Jiri Wolker Theatre in Prague. The second in England is evident in leading repertory theatres especially the Royal Shakespare Company at the Aldwych Theatre, the Sheffield Playhouse and the Brian Way Theatre Centre, Ltd. in London. Projects in Britain designed to promote interest in theatre for young people include accounts of the Royal Shakespeare Company's THEATREGOROUND, Theatre Clubs for Young People, Arts' Centers, Link Theatre and drama festivals.

Recent national developments in Britain include information concerning an Enquiry into Theatre for Young People, and a published report on Repertory Theatres and Young People.

At the international level informative materials include copies of the minutes of the first assembly of ASSITEJ in May, 1966. Minutes reflect the formation of an international committee to promote translation and dissemination of children's theatre plays; and, discussion of action taken to establish possible liaison between ASSITEJ and UNESCO.

Research in children's drama may be facilitated by a list of selected children's drama personnel in Europe. The list includes names and addresses of 77 individuals in positions to assist

in developments in the United States as visiting artists, for example, as directors, teachers, or consultants.

II. Creative Dramatics

Conventional materials include 377 drama lessons and selections for teaching drama to children and youth; organized as follows: source materials including 26 stories and legends obtained from ten countries; a collection of rhymes and melodies for dramatic play with young children; a collection of 27 stories for dramatization; 35 lessons in Movement, 30 in Speaking and 29 in Playmaking in a series of four pupils' books for the elementary level, The Playmakers, Books 1-4; 27 lessons in Movement, 29 in Speaking and 27 in Playmaking in a series of four pupils' books for junior high school, Calling All Playmakers, Books 1-4; and 63 improvisations, scenes and playmaking lessons for junior high school in a series of three students' books and a teacher's book in Group Drama, Books 1-3.

Conceptual materials concerned primarily with information on leading philosophies and practices in creative and educational drama include the following: (A) guiding principles of the Stockholm Childrens' and Youth Theatre Training program; (B) accounts of five concepts taught in Britain with materials which clarify each as follows: (a) Movement - a 30 minuted film, "Discovery in Time and Space," which reflects 20 years' research in practices developed to teach the language of movement to children as an organic, mimetic approach to teach drama; five selected textbooks on movement including The Mastery of Movement, Laban and Ullman; Modern Educational Dance, Laban; Creative Dance in the Primary School, Russell; Modern Dance in Education, Russell; and Leap to Life!, Garrard; (b) Child Drama: An Introduction to Child Drama by Peter Slade; (c) Music, Movement and Mime: two study guides for classroom use and a tape recording illustrating the nature of the British Broadcasting Company's School Broadcasts; (d) Playmaking: a copy of a Teacher's book which accompanies The Playmakers, Books 1-4 by Maisie Cobby; and (e) Mime Training: a brochure describing mime training at Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama; (C) summary of creative drama concept taught in France at the Centre International D 'Etudes Pedagogiques with informative materials; and (D) informative materials concerning national developments in educational drama in Britain including the following catalogues from leading training colleges in speech and drama; copies of University of London examinations for a diploma in dramatic art, diction and drama; and information on a proposed curriculum for teaching drama as a subject in its own right from primary through secondary schools.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Conventional and conceptual materials reflect children's drama in European countries to be practiced chiefly as an art of theatre. Children's theatre is in evidence in each of the 16 countries visited. On the one hand there is very little theatre activity for children in the countries of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey and Switzerland. On the other hand a surge of imaginative theatre activity is apparent in the countries of Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden and West Germany. However, in each country where exciting theatre is evident it is produced for children's audiences largely by professional repertory theatre companies. Creative or educational drama is in evidence mainly in the countries of Sweden and England. In these countries children experience theatre arts from two viewpoints as audiences and as participants in training classes, and frequently in performances for their peers. In these countries children are taught theatre arts largely from an organic, mimetic basis which begins with movement and progresses to speech, playmaking and performance. In conclusion it appears that the status of children's drama as a theatre art throughout Europe may, in the main, be attributed to the following factors:

1. Cultural tradition. In all European countries theatre has long been recognized and supported as an essential part of any nation's cultural life. Children live in environments where the stage has been traditional for centuries.

2. Subsidy. Theatre cannot be perpetuated without financial support. In all countries where repertory theatres produce for children and youth and in Stockholm where children and youth are producers, theatre programs are subsidized by governments and municipalities.

3. Artistic quality. Repertory theatre, the spine of adult theatre in Europe, appears to be the chief force responsible for the advancement of mature artistry in children's theatre. Repertory productions for children and youth have come about mainly through liaison established between theatres and schools by organizations known as School Theatre, Theatre for Youth and by school drama programs.

4. Plays. Because there is a demand by professional repertory theatres for children's theatre plays, playwrights are encouraged to write plays for children's audiences. Playwriting competition, drama festivals and the practice of having a children's theatre playwright attached to a theatre company have resulted in the emergence of good scripts in recent years.

5. Philosophy. Throughout Europe theatres aim primarily to entertain children's audiences and to build an intelligent understanding of theatre as a living art. However, in

Czechoslovakia the Jiri Wolker Theatre aims also to subtly indoctrinate the minds of children and youth with ideologies keyed to the communist philosophy. This holds true for all children's theatres in the iron curtain countries.

6. Creative and educational drama. Developments in this area of children's drama is most evident in Sweden in the Stockholm Childrens' and Youth Theatre program, and in classrooms and theatre centers in England. In Stockholm's leisure-time program training classes lead to performance by children and youth in theatre productions presented at each individual theatre center. In schools and theatre centers in England two leading philosophies and practices are apparent, one aimed to teach the arts of theatre from a fundamental theatre basis, and the other aimed to foster personality growth through drama experience.

It would seem that children's drama offered largely as theatre arts is fostering in European children an intelligent understanding and enjoyment of theatre as a living art. From a comparative point of view, this status has not yet been achieved in children's drama education in the United States. It would appear that the present position of children's drama in the United States is due fundamentally to a lack of theatre tradition and a lack of philosophy which aims clearly to provide theatre arts' education for children and youth.

The materials from abroad have potential use in the children's drama field in the United States. However, before the materials may be used to full advantage it appears necessary to first redirect the basic orientation of theatre arts' education for children, and then to research the materials in relationship to the new orientation. A first step appears to be that of inviting the existing national children's drama organization, CTC, to become custodian, promoter and disseminator of the materials. From this pivotal position three alternatives for the use of the materials seem feasible:

1. To promote the use of the materials as they now stand in order to advance existing programs which practice the subject as an art of theatre;

2. To make the materials available to the project director of the CTC Developmental Conference on Children's Drama which is now in progress of organization; or,

3. To combine the two alternatives in the order of priority most expedient.

If the first alternative were followed and CTC accepted the responsibility of housing, disseminating and promoting materials

perhaps the materials could be placed permanently in the AETA office in the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. In this event a summary of this report with a listing of results and a listing of exhibits could be made known to the membership of CTC, AETA and to other educational, recreational, theatre and public service associations concerned with the education of children and youth. All materials including particularly the film, tape recordings, film strip, play scripts, production photographs and drama textbooks for both children and teachers could then be made available, upon request to CTC, for examination at conference meetings at local, state, regional and national levels. If, after examination, individuals or groups were interested in translating scripts, producing plays, publishing materials, researching developments, inviting theatre personnel from abroad, or ordering any materials for further use, permission for such requests should be channeled first, through CTC, and second with the proper person, theatre, organization, corporation or publisher abroad (as specified on each material exhibit). Orderly procedure should thus serve to provide continuous use and dissemination of materials to interested persons and groups throughout the nation.

The second alternative would offer to the CTC Developmental Conference an opportunity for immediate research of the materials. In the area of children's theatre, for example, the following European theatre concepts could be investigated: educational theatre programs performed by professional repertory theatre companies and the participation program by children and youth in the Stockholm Childrens' and Youth Theatre; theatre production, plays and projects; national and international developments; and research in children's theatre. If after initial research a need for further examination seemed necessary personnel from abroad could be invited to participate in Developmental Conference meetings. In the area of creative dramatics the materials offer research in the principles and practices of leading programs in Sweden and England. If it seemed advisable after initial research, selected personnel from abroad could be invited to serve as consultants to the Developmental Conference, particularly in the area of curriculum development. For example, in England a committee appointed early in 1966 by the Arts' Council of Great Britain has been in process of planning a curriculum designed to teach drama as a subject in its own right from primary through secondary schools. If it appeared advisable, the chairman of this committee, Mr. John Allen, could be invited to confer with the Developmental Conference in its first meetings.

Inasmuch as an admitted urgency exists for theatre arts' education for children, it would seem important for the executive board of CTC to study in the immediate future the proposed alternatives for the use of materials from abroad. In view of a scheduled board meeting in December, 1966, it is recommended that copies of this report and its summary be sent without delay to the

Director of CTC, Dr. Nat Eek, School of Drama, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

It is recommended that the Director of CTC present to the officers and governing board a summary of the report and the proposed alternatives for the use of theatre arts' materials from Europe. It is further recommended that the Director of CTC present to the governing board an invitation for CTC to become permanent custodian, promoter and disseminator of said materials.

Should CTC respond favorably to the proposed alternatives, the materials should be delivered to this division of AETA, and CTC should be given first priority for the use of the materials. On the other hand, if CTC does not approve either the proposed alternatives or the invitation to become custodian of the materials, it is recommended that the institution where this research project originated become the custodian and disseminator of the materials. In this event the materials would be placed in the School of Drama Library at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, and the materials would be used and disseminated as proposed in the first alternative.

In conclusion, it becomes clear that an educational program of theatre arts for children needs to be based on the current philosophy of education which is concerned with the quality and intellectual aims of education and "with the ideal that education should serve as a means of training well-balanced citizens for a democracy." A sound program of theatre arts' education at the primary and elementary levels should insure a more promising future for theatre arts' education at secondary and college and university levels. A future based on an educational concept of this nature, national in scope, is certain to bring increasing numbers of talented students to the field, increasing activities in research, playwriting, production and curricula development and increasing demands for the establishment of new theatre programs for children and youth in cities and communities throughout the country.

The materials from Europe contain sound and germinant ideas which, if properly researched and developed could serve to meet both quantitative and qualitative future needs in the children's drama field. It is hoped that these materials will serve as a catalyst to unite and direct the energies and imaginations of the national children's theatre arts' community into concern and action toward a new philosophy of theatre arts' education for children.

REFERENCES

There are 14 references listed in the final report.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A lists Children's theatre materials including 76 entries, designated as exhibits, nos. 1-76.

Appendix B lists creative dramatic's materials including 37 entries, designated as exhibits, nos. 77-113.

Appendix C lists children's drama personnel including names and addresses of 77 persons in positions to assist in children's drama research in Europe and names of 20 persons in positions to assist in children's drama developments in the United States.